

# **MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING**

## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 10, 2013**  
**Prince George's County Court House**

### **ATTENDEES**

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Bonnie Ariano, Ellen Alexander, Scott Beard, Barbara Bond, Laurie Rajala on behalf of Tammy Brown, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger, Scott Keller, Molly Knipe, Patricia Marshall, Margery Patten, Bonnita Spikes, Debra Tall, Deborah Unitus and Virginia Wolf.

**STAFF:** Anne Litecky and Lauren O'Malley.

**GUESTS:** Angela Alsobrooks, Russell Butler, Michael Cohen, Lisa Jordan, Kenneth Luck, Michelle Lee, Pauline Mandel, Roberta Roper, Sarah V. Jones, Barbara Harvard, Col. Darrin Palmer, Lt. Col. M. Rocky Roccapriore, Arleen Joell, Elaine Moore, William I. Smith, Ada Clarke-Edwards, Mary Kauffman, Donine Carrington, Artemis Moutsatsos, Dorie Arbach, Cheryl Banks, Charmaine Harvin, Joann Douglas, Bobbie Harper, Helen Quan, Arleen Joell, and Michael Gonnella.

**WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER:** Ellen Alexander, Chair, began the meeting at approximately 10:48 a.m. A special note of thanks to Patricia Marshall for her assistance with coordinating today's meeting.

### **MINUTES:**

- Motion: Move to approve Minutes of May 1, 2013.
- Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved.

### **Community Speakers**

- ❖ **The Honorable Angela Alsobrooks, State's Attorney for Prince George's County**
  - The Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office is currently promoting the 2013 "Fund Run".
  - The State's Attorney's Office strives to be a source of healing and treats all crime victims as if they are their own family members.
  - Prince George's County has established an Elder Abuse Unit, which is the only such unit in the State.
- ❖ **Joann Douglas, Victim Witness Unit Chief, Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office**
  - Joann Douglas is a Victim Witness Unit Chief in the Homicide Division of the Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office (SAO) and has been with the office since 1981.
  - The Victim Witness Unit in the SAO has grown from 4 Victim Witness Coordinators to 8, which includes bilingual advocates and a separate Domestic Violence Unit.
  - The Coordinators and Advocates assist victims in every stage of the judicial process.
  - The Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office's Victim Witness Unit distributes "initial contact packets" to all victims which includes information on VINE, Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Crime Victim Notification Forms, and other case information
  - Prince George's County recently received an MVOC Grant which will allow them to hire a victim advocate for District Court.
  - The most pressing needs for the Unit are the budgetary constraints regarding relocation assistance, and lack of manpower:
    - There are only 8 advocates in a circuit court which hears 40,000 cases per year. To help assist victims the Unit is looking into establishing a relationship with volunteers from

local Seniors Programs who will sit with victims during trial when an advocate is not available.

- Additional support groups are needed for families of homicide victims.

❖ **Obi Dala on behalf of Marilyn Bland, Clerk of the Circuit Court**

- The Clerk of Court is charged with keeping records independent of all other agencies.
- The Clerk's Office maintains records for every case, including *Crime Victim Notification and Demand for Rights Forms*, in criminal cases.

❖ **Deputy Director Col. William Smith, Department of Corrections**

- Victims are notified prior to the release of an inmate. The Department of Corrections notifies victims if: 1) a Crime Victim Notification Form has been filled out; 2) District Court Commissioner has granted a temporary no contact order; 3) There is a no contact order on file.
- In 2009 there was a serious mishap when the systems were upgraded. VINE was wiped out and victims were not notified, creating potentially dangerous situations. This issue has been resolved and steps have been taken to ensure that it never happens again.
- Releases are scheduled Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and controlled releases are executed anytime 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

❖ **Major Elaine Moore, Prince George's Police Department**

- The Domestic Violence Unit with the help of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence has established a Lethality Assessment Program and the Family Crisis Center is a partner.
- During serious and repeat calls, the first responders are contacting Community Advocates for Family and Youth (CAFY) who responds to the scene at the time of need to hopefully interrupt the cycle.
- The collaboration allows the department to touch more people.
- Approximately 10 lethality assessments are given out each month.
- Barriers: The Domestic Violence Unit is very dependent on CAFY and needs to find ways to internally serve these populations. Cultural differences also create hurdles, 15% of the county is Hispanic, and the percentage of Hispanic victims is even higher.
- Biggest challenge: training police officers on victims' rights.

❖ **Bobby Harper, Sheriff's Office for Prince George's County**

- Supplemental police reports are used by advocates to follow up with crime victims in domestic violence cases.
- Domestic violence cases can last 30 days to one year.

❖ **Lt. Col. Mark "Rocky" Raccapriore, Sheriff's Office for Prince George's County**

- The Sheriff's office processes approximately 60 inmates per day in court.
- The office processes approximately 5,000 calls.
- Approximately 7,000 victims per year are serviced.

❖ **Lt. Charmaine Harvin, Prince George's County Police DV Unit**

- The unit responds to domestic violence calls and centralizes a group of officers and investigators and now falls under the Criminal Investigations Unit.
- The unit is extremely dependent on CAFY to ensure that the victims are connected.
- There were 11,000 repeat calls in 2012, and the unit was established to address this issue.
- To reduce the number of repeat calls, the unit hopes that victims will become familiar with the same investigators and the unit plans to track and inquire about repeat calls.
- There will be 12-14 investigators assigned to the unit and will serve every level of Domestic Violence.

❖ **Col. Darrin Palmer, Prince George's County Sheriff's Office**

- The Sheriff's office establishes comfort and security in the courts. The deputies maintain order and keep victims safe during the judicial process.
- The Sheriff's office understands the need for criminal justice agencies on every level to act as partners and allies to meet the needs and rights of victims.
- The office serves summons and warrants in a hierarchy aimed to get the most dangerous offenders off the street.

❖ **Ada Clarke-Edwards, Esq., Family Justice Center**

- The goal of the Family Justice Center is to bring agencies together in a one-stop shop approach to assist and to make services more accessible for domestic violence victims.
- The center is modeled after the National Alliance Justice Center in San Diego, CA.
- Current county challenge: on average, victims have to visit 13-20 different agencies, which are spread out throughout the county. It is difficult for victims to make travel arrangements, which decreases the likelihood that they will follow through with the services. The Family Justice Center aims to alleviate this problem.
- In the next 30-60 days, the Center hopes to establish a location, which is easily accessible via public transportation and to get the appropriate agencies in place.
- The Center project is approximately one year out and is currently in the strategic planning phase with the assistance of the National Alliance Justice Center in San Diego, CA.
- At this time, plans do not include a Child Advocacy Center (CAC).

❖ **Helen Quan, Esq. House of Ruth**

- The House of Ruth offers counseling, emergency shelter, and a legal clinic to victims.
- There are six (6) legal offices: The Baltimore City District Court House, Prince George's County Main Office, Hyattsville Courthouse, Upper Marlboro Courthouse, Montgomery County Courthouse, and the Silver Spring Courthouse.
- The House of Ruth serves victims of intimate partner violence.
- The Prince George's County locations have a total of 4 full-time attorneys' who assist victims.

❖ **Roberta Roper, Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc.**

- The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center was established 31 years ago as a result of Roberta and her husband, Vince Roper's experience with the criminal justice system after their daughter was slain.
- Today, there is a wealth of rights and services for crime victims but a major gap exists in support services for families of homicide.
- The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center offers support services to victims including education, accompaniment, service connection, legal representation, counseling, and community constraints.

❖ **Arleen Joell, Community Advocates for Family and Youth**

- CAFY is a community based organization which provides short and long-term victim services and outreach. CAFY's partnership with the Prince George's County Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit allows for pro-activity in reaching out to victims.
- Thanks to the partnership with Department of Social Services, District Heights Family & Youth Services, advocates receive reports within 24 hours of the incident.
- Each victim is provided a service plan.
- Individual and group therapy is offered to crime victims.
- Bilingual services are available.
- CAFY received over 4,000 referrals last year.
- CAFY is comprised of 9 part-time staff members and 25 volunteers.

- CAFY provides victim services for identity theft and fraud cases.

❖ **Chief Col. Michael Gonnella, Municipal Chief's Association**

- The majority of municipalities turn over serious cases to the Prince George's County Police Department, but Greenbelt, Laurel, and Hyattsville handle the majority of their own cases.
- Every department, regardless of size participates in the lethality assessment program.

❖ **Cheryl Banks, Prince George's Hospital SAC/DV**

- The SAC/DV Unit in the hospital has just celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing services to victims in Prince George's County.
- Having the center in the hospital is ideal because of the 24 hour component.
- The center provides crisis counseling and 24 hour forensic medical exams which are given by a team of 12 forensic nurses who are on call 24 hours a day/7 days a week and approximately 200 exams are given yearly.
- The counseling component consists of 3.5 professionals, the 0.5 employee being the Spanish speaking professional.
- The Center provides advocates for victims and community education.
- A DV program has been implemented hospital-wide to ensure that all medical professionals can accurately identify partner violence and an assessment is used to identify victims.
- The barriers faced in the Center are the need for HIV prophylaxis and the need for bilingual advocates.

❖ **Sarah Jones, Family Crisis Center (FCC)**

- The Family Crisis Center serves women and children who are fleeing domestic violence.
- Over the last 30 years, the Center has expanded from 20 beds to 55 beds and in emergencies can hold 60-65 people.
- The Center is funded mostly through grants and faith based organizations have helped to alleviate budget constraints by providing supplies and products.
- The Center assists perpetrators of abuse with anger management and abuse intervention.
- The shelter houses 300-400 women and children yearly and serves 3 meals a day to every resident.
- The goal of caseworkers in the center is to get the women to a point where they are self-sustainable.
- The center depends on interns from local universities and volunteers to provide counseling and additional services.
- The Center provides life skills training, counseling, prescription assistance, transportation, workforce development and childcare, GED Programs, a Lethality Program, and Crisis Hotline.

❖ **Dorie Arbach, Child Protective Services**

- Child Protective Services (CPS) meets the needs of children in cases of abuse and neglect perpetrated by a family member or caretaker.
- There is a Child Advocacy Unit which is specialized in child sexual abuse.
- CPS interfaces with many agencies to improve the outcomes of children.

❖ **Garden of Remembrance**

- April 3, 2013 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the homicide of Stephanie Roper and the opening of the Garden of Remembrance.
- Donations are welcomed.

- Memorial bricks are installed and trees planted once a year, 6 weeks prior to the annual memorial garden service.
- Memorial bricks can be purchased for \$125 and a tree for \$300.
- Challenges: raising money for Garden Plaque.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** Guests and Board members were thanked for their participation. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

**The next Board meeting will be held in  
Frederick County  
on  
Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.  
Location TBA**